



# The Seattle City Attorney's *Liaison Links*

Quarterly Connection to the People  
and Programs of your  
*Precinct Liaison Offices*

North - East - West - South/Southwest

Also in this issue:

\*Auto-theft figures

•What is a Good  
Neighbor Agreement

•New East Precinct  
Police Commander

Please visit the Precinct Liaison web site:  
[www.cityofseattle.net/law/precinct\\_liaisons](http://www.cityofseattle.net/law/precinct_liaisons)

Winter 2005 - 2006

## NORTH PRECINCT

### Auto-Theft and the Pilot Project in the North Precinct

By Thomas A. Carr

Auto theft is a serious and rising law enforcement and community problem in Seattle. Vehicle owners who have their cars stolen suffer the huge inconvenience, expense and time loss from work, and all vehicle owners pay higher insurance rates to cover the replacement of stolen vehicles. Some statistics to acknowledge at a quick glance:

- Every 27 seconds, a motor vehicle is stolen in the United States.
- Nationally, more than 1.26 million vehicles were stolen in 2003 with an estimated value of approximately \$8.4 billion dollars.
- In Seattle, over 9,000 vehicles worth more than \$41 million dollars were stolen in 2004.

•In the North Precinct, more than 3,500 vehicles worth \$15.8 million dollars were stolen in 2004.

•Since the first quarter of 2005, 1,067 more vehicles were taken, an 27% increase over last year.

•The odds of a vehicle being stolen were 1 in 196 in 2000 and highest in urban areas.

•Only 14.1 percent of thefts were cleared by arrests in 2000.

The City of Seattle decided to try a pilot program of some auto-thieves in the North Precinct only. In the past, auto-thieves were likely to receive little, if any jail time until their seventh conviction in the King County court system, making auto-theft very low on the totem pole of felony priorities that this court system processed. However, in the Seattle Municipal Court, our prosecutors will seek, at the very least, a minimum of 10 days jail time on their first offense and our sentencing recommendation will

substantially increase, depending upon prior criminal history.

In order to take-on auto-theft crimes, the Seattle Municipal Court has to file them as gross misdemeanors because the City Attorney's office does not have felony jurisdiction. But, because Seattle Municipal Court judges are not constrained by mandatory sentencing guidelines, a longer sentence is possible. This sends a message to car thieves that under the City's system they will not go free for their first six offenses. This will cost the City of Seattle in terms of increased jail costs, which is why this is just a pilot program. We hope to reduce the problem of constant auto-theft while we put these offenders in jail on their first arrest. In addition, we are doubling our efforts on crime prevention in this area by launching an education program in all the North Precinct's neighborhood community centers on how car owners can prevent their cars from being stolen. Along with

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### **Auto Theft**

law enforcement, we hope to distribute low-cost steering column locking devices called The Club, that car owners can use to prevent or deter car thieves picking theirs out of a crowd. The manufacturers of The Club are willing to subsidize local law enforcement efforts if people want to purchase these anti-theft tools for a mere \$10/- a piece.

Eventually, the goal is to coordinate efforts with King County in the hopes that they take this crime back into their jurisdiction and endure the financial burden this is likely to have on the City, while getting tougher on this crime and moving it back to the felony category.

Some quick ways to protect your car for theft (some of them just plain common sense):

- Always lock your car, even at home in your garage, and roll up your windows.
- Never leave valuables in your car or in plain sight.
- Do not store spare keys in or around your vehicle.
- Use a visible anti-theft device like a steering wheel lock.
- Use a loud alarm system with an electrical cutoff to disable the car.
- When shopping or parking in large parking lots, always park as close to any activity as possible and in well-lit areas after dark.
- If possible, equip your car with a tracking device like a "Lo Jack" or GM's "On Star" system. This will aid in recovery of your vehicle.

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•**And finally, no single one device works all the time.** That's why car owners need to consider layers of protection.

#### **And remember:**

- If you leave your car unlocked, leave your keys in the car, or leave your valuables in sight, your chances of becoming a victim is: **1 in 30**
- If you lock your car, take your keys, and conceal your valuables your chances of becoming a victim is: **1 in 1000**
- If you lock your car, take your keys, conceal your valuables, and use a visible anti-theft device the chances of becoming a victim is: **1 in 30,000**

### **Long-term Public Safety – Everyone's Goal**

By Ed McKenna

Reducing or eliminating public safety problems is one of the primary goals of the precinct liaison program. It simply makes good sense to eliminate the likelihood of someone becoming a victim in the future. Moreover, if we can eliminate or reduce public safety problems in advance, police resources won't be needed to respond to the problem. Consequently, scarce police resources can then respond to emergencies and other necessary calls.

Citizen involvement is crucial. Concerned citizens are usually the first to recognize the signs of an emerging public safety problem. Late night traffic and short stays

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are often indicative of drug houses. Skunky smells or strange chemicals and tanks may indicate grow operations or meth labs. Intoxicated persons stumbling from neighborhood stores or bars indicate potential liquor law violations.

Unfortunately, many people are unwilling to involve themselves, thinking, "nothing is going to happen anyway". We have all seen news casts where neighbors of a crime scene are interviewed and they say things like "There were all kinds of strange things going on over there..." All too common, however, is a sense of remorse when a preventable crime occurs that could have been avoided by earlier citizen involvement.

The following are some ideas you can use in order to become involved:

### **1. DON'T BE AFRAID TO CALL 911**

Many people are too intimidated to call 911 to report a crime. Yes, 911 operators can be a bit intimidating at times. Yes, your conversation will be recorded. Yes, you may get embarrassed and fumble for words. Will that stop you from calling to report problems? For many, it unfortunately seems to be the case. Here are some suggestions to make things easier: Note your location before calling 911. Find an address or cross street because you're going to be asked for the location of the incident. If you have personal safety concerns, stay in a safe place or ask that a

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## **Long Term Public Safety**

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responding officer not contact you. If not urgent, try reporting the matter to the non-emergency line at 625-5011 and listen to the menu options that follow.

Here's another reason to call on a problem: Crime statistics matter. Calls for police service and other crime statistics are used to determine levels of police service, allocation of resources, and other valuable information. Remember the saying: "If you didn't report it, it didn't happen."

### **2. ORGANIZE**

Hold neighborhood get-togethers to discuss problems and concerns. Organize a neighborhood block watch to keep an eye on each other's homes and automobiles. Form a neighborhood alliance such as a neighborhood association. Create a neighborhood e-mail tree to keep informed of neighborhood problems and events. Some neighborhoods even have their own websites to keep everyone informed of current events.

A wonderful example of a community website can be found at <http://home.jps.net/~tayles/>. The FAWN neighborhood group (Fremont, Aurora, Wallingford Neighbors) have an effective e-mail tree. They also have formed a nightly neighborhood walk to deter criminal activity and to observe problems. They routinely report graffiti, prostitution, and other crimes, and are such a deterrent that criminals go out of their way to avoid the citizen

group they refer to as "the dog walkers".

### **3. SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM THE CITY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

The Seattle Police Department has a very effective Crime Prevention Unit that can assist with information and assistance. Crime prevention employees can assist with forming a block watch, provide statistics, maps, sex offender notifications and other important information.

Crime prevention personnel can teach you and your neighbors how to recognize signs of criminal activity and are available to meet after hours with neighborhood groups and organizations. Best of all, it's FREE! Likewise, the Seattle Neighborhood Group provides assistance and workshops on crime prevention and reduction methods. You can visit their website for more information: [www.sngi.org](http://www.sngi.org). One excellent program sponsored by the Seattle Neighborhood Group is the "Nuisance Workshop". This is a popular workshop designed to inform and empower neighborhoods to deal with neighborhood nuisance issues through both legal and non-traditional means.

### **4. COMMUNITY POLICE TEAM**

Once you recognize that non-emergency criminal activity is occurring, a Community Police Team (CPT) officer may be able to help. These officers are

assigned to deal with long-term problems that regular patrol officers don't have time for. Each precinct has CPT officers available to assist you. Often, CPT officers work closely with the Precinct Liaison Attorney's to resolve public safety issues.

### **5. ASK YOUR PRECINCT LIAISON ATTORNEY FOR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE**

If you have a serious public safety problem, don't hesitate to contact your Precinct Liaison Attorney. The liaison attorneys routinely deal with problem businesses, liquor establishments and other public safety problems in an effort to reduce or eliminate the problem.

Oftentimes, non-traditional forms of lawyering are used and creative problem-solving tools are implemented to resolve the issues. Sometimes, a letter is sufficient. Sometimes, a Community Good Neighbor Agreement may be used to establish good business practices. Often, coordinated efforts with other City departments are made in an effort to brainstorm and solve problems. Sometimes, as a last resort, legal action is filed. Although we can't resolve every problem brought to our attention, we can often refer the matter to another resource or provide information or assistance that may provide some relief.

Let's not put ourselves in the position of wishing we had done something about a public safety matter. A little effort on all our parts may ensure someone isn't victimized in the future. If you have a matter you would like to discuss, please give us a call.

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## **EAST PRECINCT New Commander for the East Precinct**

By Dan Okada

In July, the East Precinct welcomed its new Commander, Capt. Landy Black. Capt. Black has big shoes to fill with the departure of Capt. Mike Meehan. Capt. Meehan, who had been the East Precinct Commander for 1 ½ years, has been sent to the Emergency Preparedness Bureau, a division of the Department of Homeland Security. This new position will give Capt. Meehan more flexibility as he pursues a Masters degree in homeland security. The highly competitive Masters program is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. We wish Capt. Meehan all the best in his new position and warmly welcome Capt. Black.

This move is a return home for Capt. Black who started his career in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) over 22 years ago in the East Precinct. Capt. Black worked as a patrol officer in the East Precinct for over seven years, between the years 1983-1990. During Capt. Black's career with the SPD, he worked in every police precinct. His time in the police department was interrupted twice due to military call-ups for both Desert Storm and the Iraq War. Prior to taking charge of the East Precinct, Capt. Black worked as the lieutenant in charge of the robbery, fugitive, and gang units in the

Department's Violent Crimes Section.

Capt. Black faces many new challenges in his new position. One of the foremost, in his mind, is building trust with the community. While he recognizes that this may take time, Capt. Black is working quickly to establish relationships with citizens and community leaders in the East Precinct. To this end, he has already attended a number of meetings and gatherings in the community and plans to continue this outreach.

Among the public safety concerns that Capt. Black hopes to address is Cal Anderson Park. The re-opening of Cal Anderson Park is scheduled for September. Capt. Black plans on working closely with the Parks Department and neighbors to ensure the Park remains free of crime and drug problems that have plagued it in the past. Another area of concern will be continuing public safety concerns along the Madison corridor. Capt. Black plans on working with the Mayor's office, the Washington State Liquor Control Board, the Department of Corrections (DOC) and neighborhood groups to help alleviate on-going crime problems. One other area of concern for the new Captain is with youth and gang violence, particularly around the area of Garfield High School and Judkins Park.

We look forward to a successful and productive collaboration with the police department in the East Precinct under Capt. Black's leadership to make it a safe place for our constituents.

## **Bar & Nightclub Meeting**

By Dan Okada

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the East Precinct held a meeting of bar and nightclub owners, managers, and security personnel in the East Precinct. Community Police Team officers hand delivered the meeting invitations to bars and nightclubs throughout the East Precinct. The event provided a chance for the East Precinct to begin working in partnership with the bars and nightclubs to address public safety concerns.

The meeting, held in the East Precinct Community Room, was well attended. Close to thirty owners, managers and security personnel were present, representing 17 different late night establishments.

Third Watch Sergeant Ryan Long, spoke to the attendees about steps they could take to increase patron safety. Among the topics covered were implementing better security practices, best practice suggestions for closing bars and clubs at night to limit the impact on neighbors, and how bars and clubs can better keep track of occupancy.

Additionally, Sgt. Long discussed the dangers that can potentially arise when owners turn their clubs over to disreputable promoters. Sgt. Long has years of experience policing the bars in nightclubs in the West Precinct which includes both Belltown and Pioneer Square.

This meeting comes at a time when the City is taking a more proactive

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## **Bar and Nightclub Meeting Continued from Page 4**

approach to lessen the negative impact that bars and nightclubs can have on the surrounding neighborhoods where they operate. This summer, the City has started a pilot program in the West Precinct for a joint assessment team. This team is comprised of members of the Police Department, Fire Department, Washington State Liquor Control Board and other City agencies. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive review of bar and nightclub operations to help better ensure compliance with City codes and regulations, increase the safety of patrons, and to reduce crime in the surrounding areas.

Also addressing the East Precinct Bar & Nightclub meeting was Susan Blaker, an enforcement supervisor from the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Ms. Blaker spoke to the attendees about their responsibilities as a liquor licensee including signage, monitoring for minors, and preventing over-service of patrons. The attending bar owners, managers, and security personnel were also given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their current concerns.

In addition to getting information, this meeting also gave bar and nightclub personnel the opportunity to meet with the SPD East Precinct command staff, sector sergeants and community police team

officers in order to build relationships for the future. Sgt. Long stressed his desire and hope to work in partnership with the bar and nightclub personnel in the future.

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### **WEST PRECINCT Nightclub Joint Assessment Team (JAT) By Tamera Soukup**

It is no secret that the Downtown residential and business communities are directly impacted by the operation of late night entertainment establishments. Some of the impacts include excessive noise, major public disturbances, disorderly conduct, overcrowding, increased traffic and litter/garbage. Factors that contribute to these impacts include: influx of residents into commercial areas; transition into a 24-hour, seven days a week City; fragmentation among the different agencies responsible for enforcement; lack of inspectors due to budgetary constraints; insufficient number of inspectors available to enforce occupancy regulations, street use permits, fire code violations, admission tax laws, parking and traffic regulations; congested sidewalks and streets; inadequate or non-existent noise, promoter and security guard regulations; lack of development standards that address noise inherent in a mixed-use neighborhood; no zoning regulations addressing the number of alcohol establishments in a particular neighborhood.

- In order to address some of these problems, the City supported a

pilot program called the Joint Assessment Team (JAT) that required certain government departments to coordinate for the purpose of gathering information and forging a better working relationship with the late night entertainment establishments.

- The Joint Assessment Team was comprised of inspectors and investigators from the Police Department, the Fire Department, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Revenue and Consumer Affairs. Liquor enforcement inspectors and the Health Department partially participated. The JAT's purpose was to assess the current situation to form a base line understanding of the issues facing the venues. From this information the City could determine which steps must be taken to work towards making Seattle a safe and vibrant city. The JAT inspected 85 late night establishments in the West Precinct over a 7-week period on Friday and Saturday nights during July and August. The JAT identified problems, educated clubs, gathered information, and addressed violations of immediate public safety concern. On October 19<sup>th</sup> the Seattle Police Department issued a Final Report on the Joint Assessment Team Pilot Project documenting the violations found. The City is now working on creating a formalized version of the Joint Assessment Team that would continue the coordinated effort on a permanent basis.

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## **Union Station Market Operating Agreement**

*By Tamera Soukup*

The owner of Union Station Market, located in the International District, has entered into an Operating Agreement with Chinatown International District Business Improvement Association (CIDBIA), the Community Action Partnership (CAP) and the Seattle Police Department (SPD).

Over the last several years the community and SPD have been continually frustrated with Union Station Market's standard business practice of selling alcohol to apparently intoxicated people and minors. This practice attracted public inebriates who brought a host of negative behaviors into the surrounding community.

In early June, the community and the city began negotiations with the Union Station Market owner to establish business practices that would be beneficial for the surrounding neighborhood. The Market owner agreed that he would not sell alcohol products that are used most frequently by street alcoholics, not sell beer in single serving containers, not to sell alcohol between the hours of 6 am and 9 am and abide by all city and state rules and regulations.

If Union Station Market violates the Operating Agreement, they will be provided notice of the violation and agree to immediately cease the sale of any alcohol products. The city and community will subsequently meet with the owner to allow the owner an opportunity to explain the circumstances.

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## **SOUTH PRECINCT**

### **Follow-up to previous edition's SOAP article**

**By Tuere Sala**

In the last edition of the Liaison Link I wrote about working to establish Stay Out of Areas of Prostitution (SOAP) boundaries in North Beacon Hill and Georgetown. This is a follow-up article. I received nearly a hundred letters from residents of both North Beacon Hill and Georgetown. Residents wrote about how acts of prostitution and its related activities were affecting their personal lives and the impact it was having on the overall enjoyment of their communities. As a whole, both communities indicated that they experienced prostitution as an important and major safety concern within their respective communities. They indicated that this was a wide spread problem and expressed tremendous support for the SOAP designation to address this concern. A conflict arose, however, when I began gathering police statistics regarding incidents of prostitution in both Georgetown and North Beacon Hill.

Police statistics provide the underlying documentation to support a SOAP designation. The amount of prostitution arrests and "calls for service" in any given area are strong indicators to law enforcement personnel of whether a problem exist, and if a problem exist, how wide spread the problem has become. More importantly, since a SOAP

designation is simply an enforcement tool, the statistics are necessary in determining whether the creation of a SOAP area would effectively address the community concerns. The prostitution statistics for both North Beacon Hill and Georgetown were relatively small. There have been a combined total of approximately 17 incident reports written regarding prostitution within the last year. Calls for service for prostitution averaged about 11 calls in any given month per area. These numbers do not indicate, from a law enforcement perspective, that a widespread prostitution problem exists in either North Beacon Hill or Georgetown.

It is not uncommon for conflicts such as this to arise between a community's safety concerns within their own neighborhood and law enforcement's perspective surrounding the safety concerns within a given community. As community prosecutors, we frequently see this type of dilemma. In most communities, resident complaints center around quality of life issues when determining the safety of their community. Quality of life crimes and violations are generally low-level misdemeanors, such as prostitution, building code violation, fire violations and general nuisance problems. Many communities will live around such conditions with increasing frustration but most residents do not take an active role in creating strategies to address the problems.

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## **SOAP article**

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In this case, I met with the residents of each community to talk about the conflict between the residents' perception of the prostitution within their community and the police statistics. Residents of both Beacon Hill and Georgetown indicated that they have lived around the prostitution problem with increasing frustration for a long time. Some residents had previously admitted that they had not routinely contacted the police every time they observed prostitution activity. Some residents complained that on many occasions when they did contact the police, given the nature of the crime, it was given a low priority response. We talked about the amount of drug use within the community and its relationship to prostitution. We discussed the need for residents to call 911 whenever they see prostitution type activity. We came up with strategies and solutions that could be put into place right now to begin to address the problem.

The Georgetown neighborhood indicated that by partnering more closely with their Community Police Team officers and the Department Of Corrections police liaison to address the drug problem they had greatly reduced the instances of prostitution within the community. Over the last several months, residents in Georgetown and I have met regularly to discuss ways to address several drug houses. The residents kept in close contact

with the police department and relayed any patterns of behavior that existed around the houses in question.

The residents kept logs of any suspicious activity and remained vigilant keepers of the neighborhood. This commitment led to the execution of several search warrants, the closure of two active drug houses and the eviction of the tenants at two nuisance properties. In North Beacon Hill, we decided to focus our attention on a particular area which appears to be a significant part of the prostitution problem. Our hope is that this focused attention will have a similar affect on North Beacon Hill as it did in Georgetown.

In conclusion, although this office will not continue its efforts to obtain a SOAP designation for Georgetown and North Beacon Hill, this office remains committed to continuing its assistance to these two neighborhoods in addressing the problem.

## **WHAT IS A GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT?**

**By Ed McKenna**

The Liaison attorney's are routinely asked, "What's a Good Neighbor Agreement"? A Google Search for the term "Good Neighbor Agreement" will bring exactly 3,340,000 responses to your inquiry. That's because there is no set definition for the term.

Good Neighbor Agreements range from a memorialized understanding between neighbors to binding contracts with penalties for failing to

comply with specific terms or provisions.

As liaison attorneys, we seek Good Neighbor Agreements with problem businesses or business that have a potential for causing public safety concerns. Rarely however, are two Good Neighbor Agreements exactly the same. Basically, Good Neighbor Agreements are a listing of good business practices, which, if followed, should reduce public safety problems or community concerns. Typical examples of the use of Good Neighbor Agreements include problem motels where prostitution, narcotics or other problems impact the community, or liquor establishments, where noise, narcotics or other concerns negatively affect public safety.

Do they work? Preliminary data appears to indicate they do work. If community complaints to the Community Police Team and liaison attorneys are any indication, Good Neighbor Agreements work very well. Likewise, 911 calls for police service in areas such as Fremont where most bars have entered into Good Neighbor Agreements are down. Does this prove they are successful? Other environmental factors could account for the good news but indicators point to the success of Good Neighbor Agreements. Of course, Good Neighbor Agreements are only successful if the terms and provisions are followed.

On occasion, the City Attorney's Office will look at legal options of enforcing agreements that have been violated. Overall however, most businesses don't want public scrutiny and want to be good neighbors so they are very willing to implement all of the Good Neighbor Agreement provisions. So, to those businesses who have voluntarily entered into a Good Neighbor Agreement with the City, a big THANK YOU for doing your part to make our community a safer place for all.

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The Seattle City Attorney's  
**Liaison Links**

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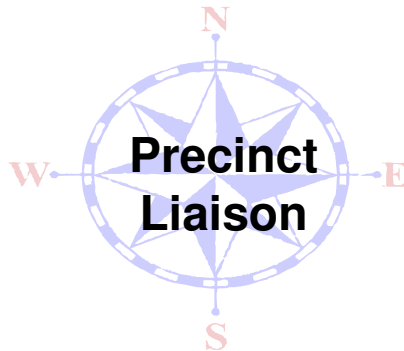
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